GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:58
ANSWERED ON:17.07.2002
ATROCITIES ON MINORITY IN BANGLADESH
YOGI ADITYANATH

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the incidents of atrocities on Minority have increased in Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to prevent the same?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) to (c) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in parts (a) to (c) of the reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No.58 for answer on 17.07.2002

(a) to (c) Since the elections in Bangladesh in October 2001, the Government has noted with serious concern reports of a number of attacks on minorities in Bangladesh. However, recent reports do not indicate an increase in such attacks. Our High Commission in Dhaka is continuing to monitor the situation closely.

2. Following the reports of attacks on minorities, our High Commissioner in Dhaka immediately took it up with Bangladesh Government. He met Bangladesh State Minister for Religious Affairs Mr. Mosharref Hossain Shahjahan on October 16, 2001 and discussed this issue. The Government also issued a Statement on 23rd October 2001 expressing its concern on the reports of attacks on minorities.

3. Shri Brajesh Mishra, Principal Secretary to PM and National Security Advisor visited Dhaka from 26-27 October 2001 as Specia Envoy of PM and took up the matter during his meetings with Prime Minster and Foreign Minister of Bangladesh.

4. India`s concern was conveyed by Hon`ble Prime Minister when Mr. Saifur Rehman, Bangladesh Finance Minister had called on him on 4th December 2001. Hon`ble Prime Minister had again raised the issue during his meeting with Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh when the latter had called on him on 4th January, 2002 on the sidelines of SAARC Summit at Kathmandu. During the meeting Hon`ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh had stated that a number of cases were filed after investigations. It was also informed that an independent Human Rights Commission was also being set up to look into all reports of violations of Human Rights.

5. The Government of Bangladesh has portrayed the attacks as political and a law & order problem, rather than a communal one, but assured us that it was seized of the matter and has given instructions for taking strong action against culprits indulging in violence against the minorities.

6. Various foreign governments including those of donor countries, which provide developmental assistance to Bangladesh, have taken up the matter with Bangladesh authorities through their Diplomatic Missions in Dhaka. Various national and international non-government agencies and Human Rights Groups have also called upon the Government of Bangladesh to fulfill their responsibilities in regard to protection of minorities.